



**TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE**  
**GEORGE P. BUSH, COMMISSIONER**

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**COMMISSIONER GEORGE P. BUSH ANNOUNCES  
WINNERS OF THE 2019 SAVE TEXAS HISTORY  
ESSAY CONTEST**

4th and 7th graders reflect on their communities' unique history

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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AUSTIN — Today, Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush announced the fourth and seventh grade winners of the 2019 Save Texas History Essay Contest, sponsored by the Texas General Land Office's Save Texas History Program. The essay contest encourages students to answer the question, "What history in your community is worth saving?"

"As a former history teacher, I am proud to announce the recipients of the 2019 annual Save Texas History Essay Contest: fourth grader, George Vernau III and seventh grader Aiden Williams," said Commissioner Bush. "It is especially rewarding to see students learn more about our state's rich history through their participation in the Save Texas History Essay Contest. Thank you to all the young Texans who submitted their essays as well as the parents and teachers who encouraged their participation. The submissions were impressive and full of inspiring examples of how future generations of Texans can appreciate the rich history in their local communities and around the state. Congratulations to our winners and to all those who participated."

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The fourth- grade grand prize winner is George Vernau III, son of Kathryn Vernau. George is in Ms. Christina Sharp's class at St. Clare of Assisi Catholic School in Houston. His essay, "The Space Baseball Community", draws attention to the important role the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the NASA Area Little League (NAAL), play in his community. George noted that these relationships span generations. His father was coached by former NASA Commander Michael Coats, a man still referred to affectionately by the NAAL community as "Coach". George added, "Who else can say that his baseball coach missed a game or two because he was in space?"

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The seventh grade grand prize winner is Aiden Williams, son of Shironica Edwards. Aiden is in Ms. Aimee Schultz's class at South Houston Intermediate School in Houston, Texas. Aiden's essay, "Freedmen's Town Bricks", highlights Houston's historic Fourth Ward and the area known as Freedmen's Town.

This post-Civil War "Freedom Colony" was one of several settlements established across the state by former slaves intent on building communities for themselves. Uniquely, Houston's Freedmen's Town still retains some of the colony's original street bricks. As Aiden points out, "the history of the Freedmen's Town Bricks shows how resourceful the freed slaves were when faced with challenging times...We need to preserve as much of this history as possible."

Each grand prize winner will receive a cash award of \$500 courtesy of Chris Cantu of Edward Jones Investments and Bob Eskridge of Just in Time Staffing. The five finalists in each grade will receive \$100 courtesy of the Rotary Club of Austin and the Sons of the Republic of Texas. All winners and finalists will receive: a Texas flag that has flown over the northernmost point of the Republic of Texas (in present-day Wyoming) and the state capitol; a Save Texas History backpack and t-shirt; a reproduction of a historic map from the GLO Archives map collection; a Certificate of Achievement signed by Commissioner Bush; and other items from the GLO online store. The names of all finalists appear on the Save Texas History website at [www.savetexashistory.org](http://www.savetexashistory.org).

Fourth Grade Finalists:

4½ Zadie Beavers

Casis Elementary School

Parents/Guardians: Alessandra and Mark Beavers, Austin, TX

Teacher: Ms. Jaynelle Nestle

Topic: Tarrytown Park in Austin

4½ Joseph Grant

Homeschooled

Parent/Guardian: Rachel Grant, The Colony, TX

Teacher: Ms. Rachel Grant

Topic: Bridges Cemetery

4½ Lucas Harmon

Northwest Elementary School

Parent/Guardian: Britni Harmon, Hereford, TX

Teacher: Ms. Michelle Brake

Topic: Hereford's beef industry

4½ Clay Thompson

Homeschooled

Parent/Guardian: Wendy Thompson, Burnet, TX

Teacher: Ms. Wendy Thompson

Topic: Fort Croghan in Burnet

4½ Eleanor Voorhees

Ridgetop Elementary School

Parent/Guardian: Diane Hoffman, Austin, TX

Teacher: Ms. Megan Almanza

Topic: "Noel Tower" in Austin

## Seventh Grade Finalists:

- ï½½ Annastasia Anowey  
South Houston Intermediate School  
Parent/Guardian: Nora Anowey, Houston, TX  
Teacher: Ms. Aimee Schultz  
Topic: Firehouse No. 3 in Galveston
- ï½½ Andrew Campbell  
Kelly Lane Middle School  
Parent/Guardian: Rory Campbell, Pflugerville, TX  
Teacher: Mr. John Powell  
Topic: Sea Shell Shoppe in Rockport
- ï½½ Nina Carter  
Creekview Middle School  
Parent/Guardian: Maki Carter, Saginaw, TX  
Teacher: Ms. Melissa Beck  
Topic: Ardent Mills in Saginaw
- ï½½ Katherine Grace Henry  
Lively Middle School  
Parent/Guardian: Tessa Henry, Austin, TX  
Teacher: Ms. Carrie Schreiber  
Topic: Austin's historical libraries
- ï½½ Ava Norman  
Garner Jr. High School  
Parent/Guardian: Priscilla Norman, Mineral Wells, TX  
Teacher: Ms. Kathy Wakefield  
Topic: Clark Gardens in Mineral Wells, TX

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All public, private and home-schooled students of appropriate age for the fourth grade or seventh grade were eligible to participate. Essays for the annual contest are judged on originality of idea, cohesiveness of thought and organization. Proper grammar, spelling and punctuation also counted.

The Texas General Land Office Save Texas History™ program is a statewide initiative to rally public support and private funding for the preservation and promotion of more than 35 million historic maps and documents. With the twin goals of preservation and education, the Save Texas History program seeks to conserve these documents for future generations and educate Texans about the rich heritage found in these vital records.

You can follow Save Texas History at <https://www.facebook.com/SaveTXHistory> and Twitter at <https://twitter.com/SaveTxHistory>. Follow the Texas General Land Office on Facebook at <http://www.txglo.org/facebook>, or Twitter at <http://www.txglo.org/twitter>, or YouTube at <http://www.txglo.org/youtube>.